



Election Accessibility Plan

2022 Municipal Election

This Plan is for use in the 2022 Municipal Election in conjunction with the Municipality's current Accessibility Plan and IASR Standards.

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Purpose

The Township of North Huron is committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to fully participate in the Municipal Elections with dignity and in a consistent manner with all North Huron electors. This Plan shall set forth the process for ensuring this commitment is successfully achieved.

Introduction

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal election in the Township of North Huron. In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Municipal Clerk is required to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2022 Municipal Elections. Specifically, the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* include:

- a) the secrecy and confidentiality of the individual votes is paramount;
- b) the election should be fair and non-biased;
- c) the election should be accessible to the voters;
- d) the integrity of the process should be maintained throughout the election;
- e) there be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast; and
- f) voters and candidates should be treated fairly and consistently within a municipality.

Accordingly, the 2022 Municipal Elections will be conducted in such a manner to ensure that:

- a) Candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services.
- b) Persons with disabilities have full access to Voting Places.
- c) Alternative methods and voting assistive devices are made available to all electors to ensure persons with disabilities are able to independently and privately mark their ballot.

In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended, following the election, the Municipal Clerk will submit a report to Council within 90 days of Election Day concerning the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.

Staff Training and Election Assistance

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will complete Accessible Customer Services Training and specific Election Training to comply with the municipal Accessibility Plan and to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Training will include:

- How to interact/communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a support person or a service animal.
- How to clearly explain telephone and internet voting.

- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.
- How to provide voter assistance, if requested.

Provision of Election Information

Candidates and electors with disabilities may request to receive information and election documents in a format that takes into account their accessibility needs due to a disability. The Municipal Clerk, or designate, shall consult with the requester and shall provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable format.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

The Clerk shall provide public notice on the municipal website and in the local media if there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. The Notice shall include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

Staff Assistance

Staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Contact information for assistance:

Telephone:	519-357-3550
Email:	vote@northhuron.ca
In Person:	Clerk's Office 274 Josephine Street Wingham, ON
Mail:	Township of North Huron 274 Josephine Street Wingham, ON N0G 2W0

Assistance to Electors/Voters

General

The 2022 Election will be conducted with Telephone and Internet Voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2022 Clerk's Procedures Manual, available on the municipal website or from the Clerk's Office, and can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

Accessible formats of Voter Information Packages are available by contacting the Clerk's Office at 519-357-3550 or vote@northhuron.ca

The Clerk's Department staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Accessible Voting Area

Section 45(2) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* requires that the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. A Voting Location Accessibility Checklist will be completed for each voting location no less than two weeks before the start of the voting period.

An accessible voting area located at the Municipal Office, 274 Josephine Street, Wingham, will be available to voters throughout the voting period during regular office hours and on Election Day until 8:00 p.m.

Parking

The Municipal Office parking lot has designated parking for individuals with disabilities that are clearly posted and located to the south of the building close to the elevator entrance.

Entrance

The entrance to the Municipal Office voting area is level leading to an elevator door. Doors to the Municipal Office have automatic door opening devices or will be propped open in a safe manner. They are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

Interior

Access to the interior voting area is level. Carpeting and doormats are level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area is well lit and seating shall be made available.

Accessible Voting Kiosk

The voting area will be low in height and have a wide area to allow individuals using mobility aids to vote independently and secretively.

Voting Assistance

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting area or staff can assist the voter in casting their vote. Voting area staff shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way to provide the assistance

Accessible Voting Technologies

Voting areas will have a kiosk/iPad for internet voting that will assist voters with disabilities in casting their votes with independence and privacy. Staff will be available to assist voters at the kiosk upon request. Support persons and service animals will be accommodated.

A kiosk will be made available during specific dates and times during the voting period at the Blyth Community Centre and Belgrave Community Centre to provide those without telephone or internet connectivity access to vote. Assistance will be provided as outlined in these guidelines.

Huron County libraries also provide internet access during regular library hours and will have trained staff available to assist voters in accessing the electronic voting site throughout the voting period for voters that choose to vote from that location. This provides voters another option of location to access the internet if they do not have their own access to the internet.

Internet Voting

Internet voting allows voters to vote through secured internet services. This method provides for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy as voters have the option of using the assistive tools they have on their own computer.

This method of voting is designed to encourage voter participation as voters do not have to attend a physical location to cast their ballot, and accessibility and privacy for persons with disabilities is maximized.

Telephone Voting

Telephone voting allows voters to vote through secured telephone services which provides for easy voting for persons with a variety of disabilities to cast their vote with independence and privacy. Land lines or cell phones can be used to vote and the method is compatible with assistive devices.

Voters can register their vote selection with the telephone keypad or voice commands, greatly increasing accessibility, privacy and independence for voters who do not have internet access.

Assistance to Candidates

General

The 2022 Election will be conducted with Telephone and Internet Voting methods. Detailed information about each voting method is set out in the 2022 Clerk's Procedures Manual, available on the municipal website or from the Clerk's Office and can be made available in an alternative format upon request.

The Candidate Package is available in accessible formats by contacting the Clerk's Office at 519-357-3550 or vote@northhuron.ca

The Clerk's Department staff are available throughout the election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Service Animals/Support Persons

Candidates are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal and/or support person at all designated election locations.

Campaign Expenses

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate. Examples of these expenses are: sign language interpreters for door-to-door campaigning, accessible transportation to attend campaign events/Candidates meetings, and cost of specialized software.

Feedback Process

The Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form (Appendix A) is available on the Elections page of the municipal website and at the Municipal Office. A copy of the document can be provided in an alternative format upon request.

Feedback is encouraged and any received will be reviewed by the Clerk and appropriate action will be taken to remove barriers or provide accommodation if necessary.

The information received on the Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form will be summarized in the post-election Election Accessibility Report and will be used to improve accessibility measures in future municipal elections.

Additional Information

Huron County Joint Accessibility Plan:

<https://www.huroncounty.ca/administration/accessibility/accessibility-plan>

Township of North Huron Website Elections Page:

<https://www.northhuron.ca/en/municipal-government/elections.aspx>



274 Josephine Street
Wingham ON N0G 2W0
www.northhuron.ca
Phone: 519-357-3550

Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form

Thank you for taking time to provide feedback on the customer service experience you received relating to the 2022 Municipal Election.

Please note the time and date which you received election related customer service:

Staff member, department or municipal location you attended:

Did we respond to your customer service needs today? Yes No

Was customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

Yes Somewhat (please explain below) No (please explain below)

Please explain what the problem was and how we can do better.

Did you experience a problem accessing election services? Yes No

Please explain how the accessibility of election related services can be improved:

Do you have any other comments to add?

Please provide contact information if you would like staff to contact you regarding this submission:

Please contact the Clerk with any questions about this process at: 519-357-3550. Personal information on this form is collected, used and disclosed in a confidential manner in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The information will be used for the purpose of improving accessible customer service.